

# **MINUTES OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**September 25, 2008**

**House Caucus Room, State Capitol Building**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sen. Dennis Stowell, Co-Chair  
Rep. Ben Ferry, Co-Chair  
Sen. Mike Dmitrich  
Sen. John Valentine  
Rep. Jack Draxler  
Rep. Carl Duckworth  
Rep. Kerry W. Gibson  
Rep. James R. Gowans  
Rep. John G. Mathis  
Rep. Michael E. Noel  
Rep. Steve Sandstrom

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sen. Margaret Dayton  
Rep. Roger Barrus

**STAFF:** Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst  
Linda Service, Committee Secretary

**Note:** A list of visitors and a copy of handouts are filed with the committee minutes

Rep. Ferry called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. He welcomed committee members and visitors and explained the charge the committee was given to cut the budget by 4% in ongoing general funds. Sen. Dayton and Rep. Barrus were excused.

## **Department of Agriculture**

Commissioner Leonard Blackham addressed the 3% Proposed Budget Cuts handout prepared by the Fiscal Analyst. He reviewed the proposed reductions for each of the agriculture divisions acknowledging the ability of these agencies to manage under the reductions. He identified one area that could be considered for reduction to accomplish an additional 1% cut: to allow the counties to fully fund their own mosquito abatement programs. He responded to concerns and questions of committee members.

## **Department of Natural Resources**

Director Mike Styler acknowledged that there is always room for efficiency in government, and with that in mind, his divisions have looked at the possibility of improving their performance.

He summarized the 3% Proposed Budget Cuts handout for the divisions under his direction. He answered questions raised by committee members and suggested that an additional 1% reduction could be accomplished by eliminating the state forestry nursery.

### **Public Lands Policy Coordination Office**

John Harja, Director, responded to committee concerns regarding coordination within the Office. Rep. Noel recommended cutting or eliminating that budget for lack of coordinating support from this Office. He suggested that these funds can be used to save other programs that may be more beneficial to the State of Utah.

Rep. Draxler expressed his appreciation to the departments who have been willing to cooperate and take a hard look at their programs.

Sen. Stowell moved to recess the meeting at 12:07 p.m.

Session reconvened at 3:01 p.m.

Sen. Stowell brought the meeting to order.

MOTION: Rep. Ferry moved to adopt the 4% Proposed Budget Cuts handout and explained the changes.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Rep. Noel moved to further reduce the ongoing General Fund appropriation to the Public Lands Policy Coordination Office by \$283,800 and reallocate it as follows: \$160,000 to the Watershed Initiative, \$23,800 to the State Fair, and \$100,000 to the GIP program. The motion further included a \$283,800 ongoing appropriation from the Constitutional Defense Restricted Account to the Public Lands Policy Coordination Office.

Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst and Sandy Naegle, Financial Manager, Public Lands Office, provided clarifications and answered questions about the impact of the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Rep. Noel moved the Subcommittee adopt the following intent language: It is the intent of the legislature that any reductions to the Public Lands Policy Coordination Office budget not impact nor negatively effect funding for the ongoing RS2477 reparation project nor the present and future RS2477 quiet title law suits the state and counties are or will be involved. The motion passed unanimously.

Rep. Ferry requested information from Commissioner Blackham and Director Styler regarding fiscal impact of consolidation in certain areas of their agencies.

MOTION: Rep. Ferry moved the Subcommittee adopt the following intent language: It is the intent of the legislature that the Department of Natural Resources be authorized to explore savings in transportation by studying its transportation costs within their motor pool fleet and report back to the Natural Resources Committee during the general session. The motion passed unanimously.

Rep. Gowans motioned to adjourn at 3:55 p.m.

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Rep. Ben Ferry, Co-chairman

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Sen. Dennis Stowell